Overview

The mission of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization and Intergovernmental Program (WIP) is to partner with state and local organizations to significantly accelerate the deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and practices by a wide range of government, community, and business stakeholders. WIP addresses the demand and supply sides of energy by facilitating investments in both energy efficiency (demand), and renewable energy generation (supply), as well as alternative transportation fuels and vehicles. WIP is made up of the State Energy Program, the Weatherization Assistance Program, partnerships and technical assistance experts that provide resources for clean energy solutions for states, local governments, industry partners, and K-12 school district leaders.

State Energy Program

The State Energy Program (SEP) provides funding and technical assistance to state and territory energy offices to advance their clean energy economy and maximize the benefits of energy efficiency through technology deployment. For decades, states have demonstrated leadership through their unique authorities to develop and implement energy policies. State Energy Offices use SEP funds to develop state plans that advance energy solutions through regional networks, strategic energy planning, executive orders, legislation and local ordinances, management of local retrofits and land-use plans. SEP also helps states address their implementation and financing barriers to enable accelerated deployment of replicable, cost-effective, clean energy technologies.

In addition to providing annual, formula funding to states and territories, SEP dedicates a portion of its congressional appropriation each year to provide competitively awarded funding opportunities. In a typical year, SEP will choose "Areas of Interest" on which to focus and states are invited to apply for any and all areas. Examples of "Areas of Interest" include: State Energy Planning; Opportunities for Innovative Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Practices; Advance Industrial Energy Efficiency and Combined Heat and Power; Clean Energy Economic Opportunity Road Maps; and Deploying Fee-Based Self-Funded Public Facilities Energy Retrofit Programs.

Since 2012, SEP has invested nearly $250 million in annual formula funds and more than $65 million in competitive funds for U.S. states and territories. Examples of SEP-supported work include:

- Financing mechanisms for institutional retrofit programs;
- Loan programs and program management;
- Energy savings performance contracting;
- Comprehensive residential programs for homeowners;
- Transportation programs that accelerate use of alternative fuels;
- Renewable programs that remove barriers and support supply side and distributed renewable energy.

Weatherization Assistance Program

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is the nation's largest, whole-house energy efficiency program which provides grants to states, U.S. territories, and some Indian Tribes to provide weatherization services for low-income families. The mission of the program is to reduce energy costs for these households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes and ensuring their health and safety. WAP's direct funding recipients, state-level agencies, contract with local governments and community action agencies to provide weatherization services, which support thousands of living-wage jobs per year. WAP funding also provides agencies with the ability to administer additional programs and provide more services to families in need. The DOE WAP provides a stable platform that attracts one utility program dollar for every dollar invested in the program.

Since the program began in 1976, WAP has helped improve the lives of more than 7 million families.

Approximately 39.5 million households are eligible for WAP services today. The weatherization process consist of a wide variety of cost-effective, energy-saving measures that encompass the building envelope, heating and cooling systems, electrical system and electricity-consuming appliances. Some measures, such as insulating walls or roofs, can provide savings for the lifetime of a house, 30 years or more. Making heating or cooling equipment more efficient will provide savings for 10–15 years.

Weatherization measures deliver substantial energy reduction and cost savings to clients in single family homes, mobile homes, and large and small multifamily buildings. Weatherizing almost 50,000 single-family homes yields approximately $307 million in energy-cost savings, and a $1.72 return for each dollar spent.[1] Non-energy benefits, such as health and safety, also ripple from weatherization returns. In 2008, households estimated saving an average of $514 in out-of-pocket medical expenses in the year following weatherization, in addition to $583 in additional pay per year due to fewer missed days of work for sick time or doctor visits.[2] Increased income and water cost savings also demonstrate the non-energy benefits of weatherization. With WAP, homes are more livable, affordable, and energy efficient.

Weatherization serves as a foundation for workforce training and work quality best-practices. The WAP's Home Energy Professional certification program in conjunction with its Standard Work Specifications for Home Energy Upgrades provide the entire industry with a consistent benchmark for work quality and workforce improvement. The WAP also supports a national portfolio of professional training centers whose services are available to all energy efficiency professionals.

State and Local Partnerships and Technical Assistance

WIP provides state and local partnerships and technical assistance to accelerate the adoption of energy efficiency and renewable energy policies and programs in the public sector. By providing resources to state, local, tribal, and K-12 school district leaders, WIP equips state and local leaders with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to unlock the clean economy in their jurisdictions. Partnerships and technical assistance activities are focused in the following priority areas: strategic energy planning, policy and program design and implementation, energy data management and evaluation, financing solutions, and energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies.

[1] Findings from a 2008 Retrospective Evaluation of DOE's Weatherization Assistance Program, conducted by the Oakridge National Laboratory.

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